1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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by the family head in whose house the ceremony is performed; but he can also count on contributions from the various relations and friends who attend the ceremony as guests of the house. We have noted the modern tendency among peasants to replace the traditional gifts in kind with contributions in money, which are customary in Bida. These expenses vary widely with wealth and status. The minimum costs—which interest us here—amount to about 3*s.* to 5*s.* in the name-giving ceremony and 8*s.* to 10*s.* in marriage and funeral ceremonies. In the case of junior family members this group of kinship expenses also includes certain occasional gifts in kind to elder relatives, especially the family head. In one Doko household (not quoted among our examples) a young farmer who worked on his own gave his whole produce of beans (worth 2*s.*) to his father and elder brother. In another household, in Bida, a man shared his crop of maize with his elder brother, who was the family head. Family heads, on the other hand, have to provide for the costs of education of their children or younger brothers (so far as it involves expenditure), e.g. the apprenticeship in the workshop of a craftsman, or the attendance at a Koran school or the Government school. They must bear the expenses that might be caused by illness—the purchase of medicines or of the services of diviner or barber-doctor. 'Pocket-money', finally, for children or junior family members is, as we have seen, supplied in the form of *bucá* work, which they are encouraged to take up.

Bride-price

The largest item under this heading is the payment of bride-price, which devolves, in traditional practice at least, on the head of the family section that is united in the labour-unit. I have pointed out already that the bride-price also involves the accumulation of wealth, and comparatively long-range planning and saving.

The bride-price is always reckoned in money, although it may be paid partly in kind; the gifts in kind, however, which may form part of the bride-price, such as cloth and beads, all have a definite money value, and must be bought for money. The Nupe bride-price, called *ewó yawó*, 'money of marriage', comprises a series of payments of varying amount, each of which is known by a special name: we have, first, the gift of the Greeting; we have further two gifts called Small Thanks and Great Thanks, respectively, the latter which represents bride-price proper, being sometimes referred to by the modern Hausa-Mohammedan term *sadeiki*; then there is the Money for Henna, to buy the henna with which the bride will adorn herself for the marriage ceremony, the Money for Pots, with which pots and cooking utensils will be bought, and finally a small gift to the bridesmaids who accompany the bride when she enters her husband's house for the first time. In the country these last two gifts are a comparatively recent introduction, having originated and spread from Bida. In addition to these various 'part payments' there is an annual gift of produce which is presented by the father of the bride-groom to the father of the bride during the period between the formal betrothal and the final marriage ceremony. The whole bride-price is

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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511 rarely paid over at once; as a rule the various part-payments are made in the course of three to five years, in the order just given. The first gift, ● 583 the Greeting, is meant to seal the betrothal and the agreement of the parents of bride and bridegroom. The various gifts listed after the Great Thanks are left till immediately before the marriage ceremony. Only the two largest 'instalments', Small Thanks and Great Thanks, can be paid partly in the form of gifts of cloth or beads; all other gifts must be in money. Let me give a concrete illustration. The bride-price of N., of Kutigi, who married in 1934, consisted of the following payments, all of which were in money:

	£	s.	d.
Greeting		1	6
Small Thanks		10	0
Great Thanks	3	0	0
Money for Henna		5	0
Money for Pots		10	0
Gifts to bridesmaids		2	6
Four annual gifts of food, to the total value of		10	0
Total	£4	19	0

Bride-price in Nupe has undergone great changes. From £3 in pre-British days it has risen later to £10, £15, and even £20. Recently it has fallen again to a more modest sum, between £5 and £10. The height of [656] the bride-price has, in fact, caused the Administration to intervene in 1934, and to lay down a maximum amount of £7. On the whole, the people welcomed the reduction. But it has not been adopted uniformly; I have found a bride-price of £9 and £10 still being paid two years after the law was enacted. In very poor households, on the other hand, the reduction has merely academic significance, as these people may not be able to afford even that amount. My informations were that originally the bride-price represented a fixed sum—*gba shita*, 120,000 cowries (£3) —which did not vary with, nor depend on, prosperity or social status, as it does to-day. Similarly every item of the bride-price was fixed traditionally, the amounts in cowries being frequently used as alternative terms for some of these payments. This is the series of payments in the traditional Nupe bride-price:

	£	s.
Gba (lit. 2,000 cowries—a preliminary gift absorbed to-day in the Greeting)		1
Greeting, or *gbaota* (lit. 6,000 cowries)		3
Small Thanks		12
Great Thanks	2	10
Total	£3	6

With the rise, and subsequent fall, in the bride-price its amount was made dependent upon the varying standards of living. It is significant that the large items in the bride-price, Small and Great Thanks, have remained comparatively unchanged; the changes affected chiefly the smaller gifts, new ones being included, or increased or decreased in amount. Now a large bride-price, which comprises all these various gifts, is still the ideal. But certain new ways have been found to harmonize the ideal with lower standards

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of living. To-day a distinction which did not exist in former times is universally recognized, between bride-price entailed in ordinary marriage and bride-price paid in the case of *yawó dengi*, marriage in the family: the latter commands a lower bride-price, approximately £3, i.e. the original uniform bride-price. In every case in which I examined the relation of 'marriage in the family' to outside marriage my informants emphasized that there were more family marriages to-day than formerly because it had become so difficult to pay the high bride-price. We see, then, that the bride-price was not simply reduced in amount uniformly; rather a certain context was introduced—invented almost—in which a lower bride-price could be legitimately accepted. The lower bride-price, which would run counter to traditional cultural standards, was thus given a certain qualified sanction by the society. However, even the low bride-price cannot always be provided by the family head. And here we find another adjustment to the lower standards of living, namely, the spreading practice to pay bride-price only for the eldest son, while younger sons must either contribute to, or bear themselves, the cost of their bride-price. The traditional duty of the family head is expressed only in a symbolic transaction: the young man who has to contribute his own bride-price in many cases still hands over the amount to the family head, who will then take all the necessary steps and carry through all the negotiations.

To the bride-price we must add its counterpart, the dowry which the bride brings into marriage and which is paid by her father. Though paid over in one, immediately before the marriage ceremony, the dowry like the bride-price also implies accumulation of wealth over a long period. The amount of the dowry used to correspond exactly to the low, traditional bride-price. Although it fell short of the exorbitant bride-price of recent years, it has been adjusted to the level of a moderately high bride-price (as represented in our example), which proves clearly the underlying intention to balance it against the bride-price even to a degree of mathematical exactitude. Unlike the bride-price, the dowry does not consist in money payments, but in various gifts and contributions in kind. It is reckoned to provide the young bride with cooking utensils, pots, and clothes, sufficient to last her for the first four or five years of the marriage; it also provides food—very excellent food—for the newly wedded couple, so that for the first month or two they are independent of the earnings of the husband or contributions by his family. This is the dowry that corresponds to the example of bride-price quoted above:

	£	s.
10 large pots, costing 1*s.* each, representing a value of		10
Beads, to wear round the waist, worth	1	15
5 pieces of cloth, worth between 5*s.* and 7*s.* each, representing a value of	1	10
Two months' food-supply, worth	1	10
Total	£5	5

Let us for the moment interrupt this description and examine the economic and sociological significance of the changes in bride-price. The question of the sociological significance or 'function' of bride-price

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has greatly engaged the attention of anthropologists. Yet the various answers which have been found, showing no little disagreement, mostly disregard the fact that institutions never subserve one single purpose, but rather combine ('amalgamate' as Malinowski puts it) a number of social purposes in their structure. The overt purpose of bride-price is clearly that of securing to a man the various legal rights over a woman which are embodied in marriage. Marriage marks the end of certain rights held over the woman by her own kin, above all, her parents, and their replacement by the new rights vested in the husband and his kin. Bride-price in this sense is adequately defined as 'an indemnification for . . . a . . . surrender of rights'.[1] However, as the bride-price is not supplied and received by bridegroom and bride themselves but by their parents or other senior family members, the transaction also has the two-fold social significance of actuating existing kinship bonds (between the bridegroom and his relations who provide the bride-price for him, and similarly between the bride and her family), and of confirming new kinship bonds which stretch, not between the two individuals, but between their families and kinship groups. The transaction of bride-price in this sense has the significance of a contract, to which the two families are the guarantors. The same applies to the parallel transaction of the dowry. Finally, a bride-price, or dowry, of considerable dimensions necessitates the accumulation of wealth and careful economic planning. Bride-price can thus also be said to provide a stimulus for production and economic enterprise in general—one of the motives which every society provides, and needs, to impel it to 'produce, to muster, to count, and publicize its wealth'.[2] This last aspect of the purposefulness of bride-price is, of course, not present in the conscious thought of the people themselves. It expresses a purpose or need read into the facts by the student of society. The first two purposes of bride-price, on the other hand, represent conscious motives of conduct, and the degree of their consciousness becomes evident in the changes which bride-price has undergone in Nupe.

Now, in the traditional Nupe bride-price the aspect of 'indemnification' is greatly overshadowed by the other two aspects. As we have seen, wealth was not 'given' but merely exchanged in the strict sense of the word, the bride-price being balanced exactly against the dowry. When bride-price increased disproportionately, far outstripping the dowry, the element of indemnification and payment as such came to the foreground. The people themselves link this surprising rise with the new economic and political development under British rule: 'Prices were high, and everyone had money.' To some extent this was no doubt due to an increased demand, the greater prosperity showing itself in a rising scale of polygamy. Partly also the motive of 'indemnification' gained a new, additional, significance, that of display for the sake of prestige. But the higher bride-price also showed the effectiveness of the third, economic, factor: for in the highly stimulated economic system the traditional stimulus embodied in the bride-price had to be increased in order to keep pace with the new, higher, level of production and expenditure.

[1] A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, in *Iowa Law Review*, XX, 1935, p. 295.
[2] D. M. Goodfellow, op. cit., p. 132.

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This interdependence of bride-price and level of production also explains the limited success, among the more prosperous sections of the population, of the attempts of the Administration to fix the bride-price at a lower and, as it were, arbitrary figure. 511 583

Indeed the development of bride-price under the economic stress of the last decade shows how firmly the new 'want' of higher bride-price had struck root. The solution which the people themselves worked out left the 'indemnification' and the 'economic' aspect of the bride-price intact; it achieved the necessary adjustment by reassessing the 'sociological' or kinship aspect. The contribution of the family to the bride-price of its junior members was reduced to the symbolic transaction of the family head acting on behalf of the bridegroom who must himself provide the bride-price; above all, the new rules allowed a reduction in the bride-price in family marriages, i.e. marriages in which the marriage ties do not establish new, but utilize already existing kinship bonds.

We may mention here certain marriage rules customary among the upper classes of Nupe in which an outwardly similar result is achieved by a somewhat different process of reasoning. We have learned that bride-price is kept low in class endogamous marriages among the nobility; a man of status may also marry his daughter to one of his *bara*, and himself put up the bride-price, so that in effect no exchange of wealth takes place; and there is, finally, the custom among the upper classes to marry their daughters with a very low, nominal, bride-price to Mallams—the remission of the bride-price being regarded as a pious act. In these cases the bride-price is kept artificially low in order to ensure that the women of the aristocracy should all be married to men of the same class, or should marry certain men whom they would be unable to marry if the bride-price were high: the political and religious gain balances the material sacrifice.

The institution of bride-price in Nupe gives us an exceptionally clear picture of the multitudinous structure of institutions. It also illustrates the discriminating action of economic evaluation, which, out of the number of social purposes subserved in the institution, fastens upon certain specific purposes for transformation into concrete economic wants. Yet those that are not thus transformed need not be purposes which have lost their significance entirely, but may reveal it indirectly, in the form of 'theoretical values'. We recall the disintegration of the institution of bride-price in present-day Bida, in the case of those young labourers who spend their money among other things on 'women' instead of saving it for bride-price. Let us realize that in a society like Nupe, in which traditional morality forbids pre-marital sexual intercourse, the 'indemnification' aspect of bride-price also implies the purchase of legitimate sexual satisfaction. Now, these young labourers have discovered that to-day sexual satisfaction can be bought more cheaply, and without incurring the obligation of marriage. Short-sightedly, they perceive only this one need and disregard the other aspects of marriage and bride-price—the need of founding a family, of establishing new kinship bonds, and of ensuring continuity of the group. They admit these other needs—in theory; yet these needs are present, concretely, in 511 583 936

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the minds of the older generation (though it is unable to enforce its authority), and they will be present, we may assume, also in the minds of the young men themselves when they reach a more mature age and understanding.

The economic demands which we must list under the second heading—demands implied in duties towards the community—are comparatively light. In village economy they are embodied in the regular contributions to village rituals in money or kind, and in occasional gifts to the chief (mostly gifts of kola-nuts or produce, worth between 3*d*. and 6*d*.). To give an example of the former: the total cost of a village ritual of moderate dimensions comes to 10*s*., which sum would be divided among, say, twenty households. But rituals may also be celebrated both more lavishly, and on a much smaller scale, with a cost between 3*s*. and 6*s*.[1] In Bida we have again certain expenses entailed in religious obligations—alms to Mallams, the traditional killing of a ram on the day of the *Sallah* or, occasionally, labour and money spent on the building of one of the small mosques in which neighbours and relatives worship.[2] Logically, tax should have been listed in this group of expenses.

The last group of 'cultural requirements'—personal wants—is the most fluid and the most difficult to outline. It follows most closely economic stratification and the varying standards of living. As we shall see later, almost every want in this group is seen against the standards set by the social *élite* of the country. In certain respects, however, we can attempt to define certain minimum wants even in this field. Thus every family head is expected to possess, in addition to his simple working clothes, at least one 'good' dress, a dark-blue or white gown, in which he would appear at meetings in the house of the chief and at various ceremonial occasions. Similarly he should own a white turban in addition to the straw hat or cap which he wears on the farm, ornamented sandals of leather, and a stick or carved staff to carry about; he should wear a heavy glass bangle round the arm, possibly a finger-ring and various charms of the kind that are sold by Hausa traders on the markets of the country.[3] A major failure to achieve these standards of personal requirements is regarded as a sign of poverty and disgrace. Often have I listened to old men complaining about the sad state of affairs which compelled them to be content with a shabby cloth or cap when gown and turban were more fitting to their age and status.

But here we must take into account that cultural 'rift' between urban and rural standards of which I have spoken earlier in this chapter. Many wants which either do not exist, or do not exist in the same urgency, in the village are considered essential in Bida. Here the closeness of the social *élite*, both in the literal sense of the word and in the sense of existing social contacts, raises the standards of living. In Bida, where one

[1] See my article on the *Gunnu*, p. 99, n. 2.

[2] The building itself is done by the people, the roofing and thatching by the professional builders of Bida. The costs were, in a concrete case, 10*s*., and were divided among five households.

[3] These charms consist of a piece of paper supposed to be inscribed with a verse of the Koran or a Mohammedan formula of blessing, which is sewn in leather, and worn round the arm or neck.

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2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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with which indigenous sacred knowledge was never concerned are now tacitly assumed to be within the ken of mallams. Whenever you ask the 'man in the street' about the origin of the world, about the sun, moon, and stars, or about the rules of the calendar, he will refer you to the mallams—'these are things the mallams know'. More often than not, this trust is sadly misplaced. But as the Nupe lack of interest in mythology admits of one exception, namely, myths or legends about the genesis of Nupe kingdom, so the growth of the Moslem Emirate has become the theme of numerous stories and quasi-mythical traditions.[1] To be sure, they are not Moslem traditions in the strict sense of the word; but they are traditions about the crucial events of Islam as seen through Nupe eyes. In this sense they add to the religious supports which the Fulani Emirate has come to command, much as the pagan kingdom drew some of its strength from the cycle of myths devoted to Tsoede and his miraculous deeds. And in this sense, too, they may be said to 'fill lacunae', that is, to replace a mythology outdated by events.

Among the other features of the Moslem 'way of life' several fit remarkably (and fortuitously) into the pattern of Nupe culture. This is true, for example, of the attitude to representative art, which is absent in Nupe and discouraged by Islam; of certain general rules of marriage, such as the payment of a 'brideprice', the ease of divorce, and the preference for marriage within the kindred;[2] of the custom of circumcision and one of the dietary rules of Islam, the prohibition of eating pig.[3] The ease with which Moslem kinship rites or the Islamic method of divination found a niche in Nupe life has already been discussed.

There are a few exceptions, however. The Nupe preference for *yawó dengi*, marriage within the kindred, refers only to cross-cousin marriage and excludes the marriage of parallel cousins, which Islamic practice permits and recommends; similarly the sororate, common in Moslem countries, is forbidden by traditional Nupe custom; conversely, the Nupe preferential marriage, between a young man and his mother's brother's widow, is unknown to

[1] Some of these have been quoted in *A Black Byzantium*, pp. 78–9.

[2] The Nupe 'brideprice'—*ewó yawó* ('money of marriage')—corresponds to the 'dower' (*Mahr* or *sadaq*) of Islamic law. The ready acceptance of their equivalence is seen in the linguistic usage, the Arabic word *sadeiki* having become almost a synonym for *ewó yawó*.

[3] Strictly speaking, traditional Nupe culture does not taboo the eating of pigs; but there exists a general idiosyncrasy of this kind, and the Nupe do not keep pigs (unlike their Yoruba neighbours). Another dietary rule of Islam, the prohibition of intoxicants, clashes with the great liking of the Nupe for sorghum beer and with the prominent part this drink plays in all sacrifices. The Nupe Moslem have, in fact, abandoned beer for palmwine, which many consider to be exempt from the Qoranic prohibition.

MARRIAGE

582 Marriage among the aristocracy is largely endogamous, i.e., within the ruling
565 class, this "family marriage" as the Nupe call it being characterized by a much lower marriage payment than exogamous marriage. Parallel and cross-cousin marriages are encouraged by Moslem custom, though the former is contrary to the traditional marriage rules, so that the scope of "family marriage" is considerably widened. The practice of polygyny, and the fact that the number of wives indicates wealth and status, leads men of wealth and position to marry outside their social group. In order to keep within the Moslem law of four wives only, further wives are relegated to the position of concubines. Ageing wives of the nobility are divorced and replaced by younger girls.[5]

584 According to Temple,[6] betrothal may be as early as 5–7 years for a girl and 10–12 for a boy, but this is not usual. The marriageable age for girls is usually 16–17, but may be as late as 20. Some of the wealthy Bida families marry off their sons very young to enhance their own prestige.[7]

583 Provision of the marriage payment (*ewó yawó*, "money of marriage") devolves on the head of the family section which is united in the labour unit (*efakó*).[8] It is made up of a series of payments of varying amounts, each of which has a special name. These are: "greeting," "small thanks," "great thanks," "money for henna," and "money for pots," as well as gifts to the bridesmaids and small annual presents of food to the girl's parents. The payments are usually spread over a period of three to five years. They are now valued as a total sum in money which has fluctuated considerably. In pre-British times it was about £3, but later rose to as high as £20, until, in 1934, the Administration intervened and fixed the upper limit at £7. It is becoming customary for the family head to provide the marriage payment only for the eldest son, younger sons having to contribute part of their own, or even bear the whole cost. It is usual for the bride's father to provide her with a dowry, generally consisting of gifts in kind.[9]

[184] Among the Dibo sub-tribe, according to Temple,[10] girls may be betrothed before birth. The marriage payment is high, but may be paid in farm work. The suitor may, however, be outbid by another and his presents returned before the consummation of the marriage.

588 A form of "woman marriage," similar to that practised by the Yoruba of Kabba Province, is recorded by Temple for the Nupe of Gurara District (Lapai Emirate). Here a rich woman goes through a form of marriage with a girl and allows men to have access to her. Any children born belong to the female "husband."[11]

585 The wedding ceremonial occupies a period of 12 days, divided into three phases of four days each. It begins when the bride, assisted by her young female companions, puts on her dress and veil and receives visitors in her house, the climax being reached on the fourth day when professional musicians and drummers are hired and the bride's father offers food and drink to the guests. Among these will be two envoys of the bridegroom, who will be present at a sacrifice offered by the bride's father to ensure a prosperous marriage blessed with children. Among Moslems a mallam makes a public announcement of the marriage at this stage, which legally establishes the bond. In pagan families, however, the bride is taken to her new home by the bridegroom's envoys, where she is received by her parents-in-law and taken to her newly painted sleeping-hut. The next morning the bridegroom's father performs a sacrifice at which the bride's mother's brother is present,

[5] Nadel, 1942, p. 150.
[6] Temple, 1919, p. 322.
[7] Nadel knew of two such cases where the husbands were still pupils at the Government school.
[8] See above, p. 26.
[9] Nadel, 1942, p. 51.
[10] Temple, 1919, p. 114.
[11] Ibid., p. 324.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922

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586 A woman may equally divorce her husband for crime, or she may get special permission from the Court to marry someone else, if he consents, for the period for which her husband is imprisoned. She cannot obtain divorce on any other ground except that of desertion for three years, or failure to keep her. A man can obtain it for other causes, but rarely does so without good cause, for he loses all the dower money he has paid for his wife. Remarriage is permitted to both sexes after a three months' interval.

581 764 Marriage plays an important part in the social life of the Nupe and is *de rigueur* for both sexes. Until a man has married a virgin with due ceremony, he is accounted a nobody and his fellows will neither speak with him nor listen to him. No one will bury an unmarried woman, even though she be a widow. After much delay this degrading duty devolved upon the dogarai, and now upon Government labourers.

584 The would-be bridegroom calls three times upon the girl's parents, each time bringing with him some small present for the father, mother and girl, and then makes known his intentions. The girl's consent has to be obtained, and the parents generally tell him to go and ask her, without mentioning that he has been first to them. If she agrees she tells him to go to her people and thus it is arranged. Indeed it is sometimes she who first suggests to her father whom she would like to marry and he takes the necessary steps. The engagement is formally recognised when the suitor gives 12s. 6d. in money and two calabashes of kola nuts to the father, and 7s. 6d. in money and one calabash of 583 kola nuts to the mother, for them to distribute amongst the 584 male and female members of their family respectively. From this time on the pretendant must work on his father-in-law's farm or house, together with his friends, two or three times a year, and every big Salla he gives to his bride 5s. worth of clothes and 2s. to plait her hair. This may last for some years, as a boy may be betrothed at the age of ten or twelve and a girl at five or seven. These early engagements are, however, considered undesirable, and the yearly cost to the groom effectually tends to discourage them. A careful count is kept of all that he gives, so that it may be returned if the girl should ultimately refuse to consummate the marriage. Once they are engaged the boy [574] and girl may not play together, which up to the time of marriage they may do with anyone else. In fact a boy and girl may declare themselves "saranchi," or great friends, and they are allowed to go to each other's houses until one or other of them marries.

585 When the time for consummating a marriage has come the groom gives his wife three cloths and a handkerchief, at a minimum value of 30s., and if she does not like those he has selected, she returns them and he must send others till she is satisfied. At the same time he gives her parents £2 10s., which they spend on